

Contributions

ADVANTAGES OF BEING A MEMBER OF THE BRETHREN CHURCH

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FIRST ADVANTAGE

This church, thro its teaching and influence, brings you directly to the Gospel—God's commands to us and promises for us. It does not ask you to obey the commandments of men or trust in men's promises because such commands and promises have no salvation for the soul. They will fail you in the dying hour.

The Gospel is the *only* means for saving the world. Paul says, in Rom. 1:16: "*For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.*" It is the power of God; not something else, but it the Gospel saves those who believe. Our Lord says, in John 14:6: "*I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one cometh unto the Father, but by Me.*" So not a soul can ever reach the Father but by Christ—His way. Dear reader, if you have come in Christ's way, accepted His truth, obey His commands, you are safe and can leave the world trusting in His promises. But if you have come some other way, then you have not the promises of Christ but only those of men. O, don't leave the world without doing what Christ tells you to do that you may have His promises upon which to lean. Let me illustrate:—I have seen preachers, when receiving members into their church, take a little book, (their creed or discipline) made, as they say, by their leading men, and read from it a lot of statements and questions and then ask if they were willing to obey them. But, dear friend, there is no power in such a book, because it is not of God. He had no part in making it. Hence there is no more power in such a book (only to divide the believers in Christ) than there is in a spelling book. These preachers could have read to their applicants for membership from the Gospel just as well and then had the assurance that there was some power in that which was read.

Again, when penitent believers desired to come to Christ—to obtain pardon of their sins—I have heard preachers tell them to come and pray and be prayed for at the "altar." But Christ never told his apostles to give any such directions, nor they never did so. The Gospel never gave a preacher the right to do any such thing. It's a device of men. I care not what persons have "found" there or thought they found, there is one thing sure, the Gospel never promises the remission or forgiveness of sins by that plan. If so, turn to the passage of scripture and read it, but you will fail to find it. Do you say that there certainly can be no harm in "going out" that way. Neither is there harm in hoeing potatoes,

yet you would not be pardoned of your sins by doing so even if some ignorant person had told you to do that way. But *it is wrong* to do a thing for the Lord one way, when he has told you to do it some other way. Don't you think He knows best? Why not take God's plan for it? Why not come to God in the right way? Christ says, "*No one cometh to the Father but by Me*"—my way. The salvation of the soul is a serious matter—too serious to disregard the Gospel way and say to yourself, "It don't make any difference what way." Let us look at the Gospel way; look reverently, because it is God's way. In Acts 2, we find Peter preaching; in the 37th verse, the people are asking what to do; in the 38th verse, the apostle tells them. They did (1) believe as their question shows. He says (2) *Repent and be* (3) *baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.* Now, the Brethren church steps upon this apostolic platform and gives precisely the same answer to penitent inquirers. Don't you think the apostles told the people the right thing? Then why not come in the way they direct? You do not know—can not know that you are in Christ at all without you do what the apostles have told you to do in order to get in.

Says one "Did they all come the same way?" I answer, yes. The command is, "*Repent and be baptized every one of you, etc.*" Every one who wanted to accept Christ was to do the same thing, namely, repent and be baptized. When Ananias went to Paul to tell him what the Lord would have him do, he found Paul praying, but he did not say "Paul, just pray on; you will get the power of the Holy Ghost after awhile." What did the preacher say? Here it is, in Acts 22:16, *And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.* When Philip was preaching to the man of Ethiopia, he made the good confession and his chariot was stopped by the road side until Philip baptized him, then he went on his way rejoicing. See Acts 8:36-40. In Acts 10 we read about the conversion of Cornelius. He was received by baptism. In Acts 16, Lydia, a seller of purple, heard the apostle speak and then was baptized into Christ. In the same chapter we read of the Philippian jailer, who, after the apostle spoke unto him the word of the Lord, was baptized the same hour of the night. Now, you can easily see what these Gospel preachers required; how persons were converted under their instruction. It was (1) faith, (2) repentance, and (3) baptism right along. No one received without these. So don't make light of preachers who have the courage to do precisely what these apostles did. We read of no six months probationists, no telling of

experiences, etc., before these persons were baptized, hence, the Brethren church has no such human inventions.

SECOND ADVANTAGE

The second advantage is that no one questions its mode of baptism. The disputes and doubts are all about other modes, such as sprinkling, pouring and single immersion. Why, in the name of common sense, accept these doubtful modes when you can receive the baptism which, like a good coin, will be received by any people. If you have been baptized by triune immersion, the Lutherans will receive you, the Presbyterians will accept you, the Methodists will take you without questioning your baptism, the Baptists will say, "Come right along," the Disciples will receive you into full fellowship—in fact, every denomination of any note would receive you without re-baptism. They thus admit that this baptism is safe. Then insist upon being baptized properly. Some other way may be a little more fashionable, but it can not stand the test of Gospel criticism. Jesus gave the directions to his apostles in Matt. 28:19. He said, "*baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.*" If you are immersed into the name of each person of the trinity, you can go on your way rejoicing in the thought that your baptism is safe. Why, the earliest mode of baptism of which you can read in history is triune immersion.

The Greek church has never practiced any other mode but triune immersion. The Greeks understand best the language which Jesus used, hence their practice is a strong proof of the meaning of our Lord.

In I Cor. 11:2, Paul says, "*Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, any keep the ordinances as I delivered them to you.*" Our Lord delivered the ordinances to his apostles the last night he was upon the earth.

THIRD ADVANTAGE

The third advantage in being a member of the Brethren church is that she teaches and keeps the ordinances as they were delivered. We are told what these are in Matt. 26:20-30; Mark 14:17-26; Luke 22:14-20, and John 13:2-30. We find by reading these passages that (1) Jesus and his apostles sat down to a supper. (2) He rose from supper and washed his disciples' feet and told them to wash one another's feet. (3) As they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed it and brake it; likewise also the cup after supper.

Now we do what Jesus did and what he told us to do. When we stand in His presence in the judgment day we want to feel that we have done what He said. We want to be on the safe side of the question. Paul says in I Cor. 11:33, "*Wherefore my brethren, when ye come to—*"